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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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March 15, 1978

Admiral Stansfield Turner  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

My service with this and other committees has made me increasingly aware of the influence of Iran on the American economy, and on defense planning and foreign policy. Our recent discussion reminded me sharply that the government of Iran is a one-man regime, thoroughly controlled and directed by the Shah.

I am therefore interested in what would happen if the Shah should die or be killed suddenly. Experts outside the government have given me their views on this subject and I request your assessment of it as well. Please include in your reply responses to these questions:

(1) The loyalty of government and military officials in Iran appears to be directly and personally to the Shah, rather than to a system of government or to each other: How much of this loyalty might be transferred to a successor regime, such as the regency by the Queen provided in the present formal succession arrangements?

(2) The Shah's present ruling methods appear to perpetuate and exploit constant rivalry among his subordinates. Can they be expected to offer unified support to a successor regime or is a long period of squabbling and disorganization likely?

(3) Who are the likely contenders for power if the Shah dies suddenly? The military has been a stabilizing force during transition periods in some other developing countries. For reasons of culture and history, the Iranian military apparently has a relatively low status and Iranians prefer other national models of modernization and efficiency. Is it therefore likely that, in addition to struggles by and among military officers for power and influence in the course of succession, there will also be further destabilizing contests between civilian elite groups and military officers?

Admiral Stansfield Turner

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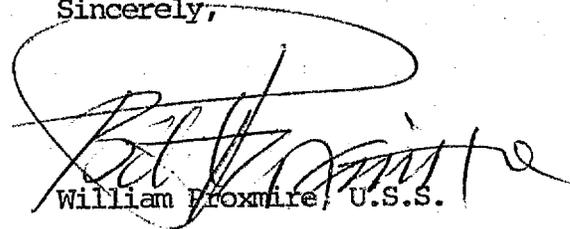
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(4) Does the present pervasive control exercised by the Shah over all aspects of Iranian public life and expression make it likely that there will be among politically active and aware Iranians a powerful urge to release repressed actions and feelings, and a strong reaction against continuing his system of rule?

I realize that an examination of the consequences of the Shah's retirement or lingering death could also be important and interesting. However, I prefer now to concentrate entirely on the situation which would be likely to follow his sudden death from accident, disease, or assassination, since this would be most likely to produce the most severe crisis and present us with the most difficult decisions.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



William Proxmire, U.S.S.

WP:jwg

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Routing Slip

*OLC*

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	D/NFAC		X		
4	LC	X			
5					
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7					
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12					

SUSPENSE

Date

Remarks: To 4: Please develop DCI response in coordination with NFAC.

D/ Executive Secretary

16 Mar 78

Date

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